

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method provides for operating a wireless communication system having packet data capabilities, and includes steps of: (a) sending a message from a mobile station to a network on a same physical channel that is used to transmit packet data, the message specifying individual ones of packet system information (PSI) messages that are required for reception by the mobile station; and (b) in response to receiving the message, transmitting only the specified individual ones of the PSI messages from the network to the mobile station over the same physical channel used to transmit the packet data. In a presently preferred, but not limiting, embodiment the message is a PACKET PSI STATUS message, and the physical channel conveys a Packet Associated Control Channel (PACCH). The steps of sending the message and transmitting the PSI messages occur during a packet data transfer mode and without suspending an established Temporary Block Flow (TBF). In the presently preferred embodiment the mobile station fills the Packet PSI Status message by including (optional) fields PSIx_COUNT and Instance_Bitmap, and by setting their respective fields to zero for the particular PSI message type in the PACKET PSI STATUS message. In response, the network determines that the mobile station has not received the particular PSI message type, and disregards an indicated PSI_CHANGE_MARK in the PACKET PSI STATUS message.

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